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IV.—ON THE POSITION OF 'RHEMATIC *TO*.'

It seems to be an established law of language that the solecism originates in colloquial usage. The barbarism which is just beginning to attract critical observation as a novelty in the written language, may have existed time out of memory in current speech. The impropriety of one generation becomes the recognized idiom of the next.

Our Quintilians may "stare and gasp," but the new word or the new flexion engrafts itself into the language, and all attempts to eradicate it are unavailing. Such was the case with our possessive pronoun *its*, with our passive progressive *is being done*. etc., and such I do not hesitate to predict will be the result so far as that particular locution which we are now discussing is concerned. The insertion of an adverb between *to* and the infinitive may be noted in a number of reputable writers, during different periods of our literary history, as *to not* admit, *to so* speak, etc. Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall, the highest living authority on questions of English usage, has discovered this peculiarity in at least a score of well known authors, extending from Chaucer and Wicliffe to George Eliot and Mr. Ruskin. In Wicliffe's theological works, vol. II, p. 304, I read: "Charity teacheth men *to not* commune thus with tyrants." There is, however, an old English writer whose pages abound in every conceivable form of adverbial and even phrasal insertion between *to* and the infinitive. I allude to Bishop Pecock, the author of the "Repressor" (A. D. 1456), one of the landmarks of early English prose, and a treatise well worthy of study for other purposes than the one now under consideration.

In order to exhibit fully the variety of forms this locution has assumed in the writings of Pecock, I have inserted the following phrases, which will illustrate almost every feature of his usage in this particular.

Repressor, page 74, *forto* therewith see. 75, *to so* be. 85, *forto* wisely and duly give. 85, *forto* thereto unnethis open their mouth. 91, *forto* meekly knowledge. 119, *forto* thereby deserve. 127, *forto* at somewhile laugh. 149, *forto so* studiously by many years judge and defame. 165, *forto* ofte think. 168, *forto* it

ensample. 119, *forto* thereby deserve. 219, *forto* always and forever feed. 222, *forto* therein work. 224, *forto* there abide. 254, *forto* thereagainst repugn. 255, *forto* therewith make. 285, *forto* in them dwell. 296, *forto* each day make ready. 555, *forto* oft and much remember him. 509, riches and power *forto* afterwards of the new win. 533, *forto* more be set. 467, 504, to not be had. 305, *forto* the more likingly fill their mouths. 342, *forto* sufficiently them find in necessaries. 307, *forto* so richly endewe. 308, *forto* well use. 308, *forto* not overmuch trade. 312, *forto* them take.

Other examples may be cited, but these are sufficient for our purpose. In "to richly endewe," "to sufficiently find," we have, I think, the parallel to our modern locutions "to fully consider," "to perfectly understand," etc. In this instance, as in many others, the language seems to have reclaimed some of its ancient idioms, and what in the present stage of our tongue is accounted a solecism is after all a falling back upon some long-forgotten usage. It is a frequent boast of English constitutional writers, that the political revolutions of the English race are for the most part a return to olden precedents and to ancient forms. This doctrine applies with peculiar force to many of our so-called neologisms. To us they seem obtrusive novelties; to the student of speech from an historical standpoint they are the revival of idioms that were in good repute during some former period of our language-growth. In their revived or modern development, such locutions as *to faithfully report* may probably be traced, in the written language, as far back as the first quarter of the present century. Richard Taylor, in his edition of Horne Tooke (1829), alludes in his notes, p. 30, to a "disagreeable affectation some writers of the present day have, of inserting an adverb between *to* and the infinitive." (I am indebted to Dr. F. Hall for this reference.) In our own day this "affectation" has become prevalent in America as well as England, and a number of reputable writers on both sides of the Atlantic have given it the sanction of their authority. It is condemned by Dean Alford in *The Queen's English*, p. 188, where the author remonstrates against the use of "to scientifically illustrate," by one of his correspondents; but it has the approval, among other contemporary English writers, of so critical a scholar as Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps. Among American writers, and especially in American newspapers, those assiduous disseminators of solecism, it has assumed almost as great a variety of forms as we find in the

English of Pecock. In the International Hymnal, used in hundreds of our Sabbath schools, I read, "born to compassion and comfort bring," a counterpart to some of the good Bishop's phrasal insertions.¹ Among reputable American authors who have made use of such locutions may be named our eminent philologist, Prof. W. D. Whitney, "to 'decidedly converge'"; Edmund Clarence Stedman, *Victorian Poets*, "to rightly appreciate," "to utterly ruin"; *Southern Review*, 1868, "to graphically pourtray."

In the *Shakespeare Memoranda* of Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, I find "to fully investigate," "to publicly brand." It would prove an almost endless task to enumerate the varieties of form assumed by such expressions as "to faithfully report," under the influence of newspaper usage: their potentialities are apparently inexhaustible. Among the most familiar may be mentioned, "to properly express," "to utterly repudiate," "to absolutely ignore," "to thoroughly convince," "to fully consider," "to precisely state," "to immediately extend." However obnoxious such combinations may seem to the delicate sensibility of the critic and the purist, it is evident that they are already too thoroughly incorporated into the language to render their eviction practicable or even possible. Their recognition by some of our most accomplished essayists and philologists is a significant indication of the firmness with which they have grounded themselves in our speech. These writers have simply anticipated the standard usage of the next generation. The authors of our next Augustan age will employ these 'neologisms' without hesitation or reserve, perhaps as little suspecting that they were once regarded with suspicion and distrust as the author of *Henry Esmond* seems to have suspected that *was being battered* was not a recognized form of the English verb in the reign of Anne, or Dr. Schaff to have been aware that *were being added* was absolutely unknown in the reign of James I.

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¹ In the English translation of Von Ranke's *History of England*, (Vol. I, p. 159,) I note the following: "He, (Aske) took the road to London, to, as he said, drive base born men out of the king's council, and restore the Christian religion in England."